

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Comet Skateboards Inc

Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex)

Comet Skateboards Zooms To New Heights

Client Profile:

Comet Skateboards, a five year0old Oakland, Californi-based manufacturing company, makes high-quality composite skateboards for professional and personal use. The company currently has less than 20 employees.

Situation:

When Comet Skateboards was approached by a handful of top skate brands to do contract manufacturing projects, the company realized that it needed to streamline its operations to increase production capacity. Comet Skateboards traditionally operated in a batch and queue mode with little visibility on customer requirements. The company began an improvement initiative using lean enterprise techniques, with help from the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex), a NIST MEP network affiliate.

Solution:

Manex provided training in the principles of lean manufacturing to the entire staff of Comet Skateboards. Lean enterprise is a systematic approach to analyzing the flow of information and materials in order to eliminate waste while striving for perfection through continuous improvement. As the first step, Manex led the Comet Skateboard team through a value stream mapping exercise, which mapped out the activities in the production process. Manex employed a cellular manufacturing technique to redesign the manufacturing floor for better production floor space utilization, product flow, and visual balance. Finally, Comet implemented a kanban-driven finished goods inventory to better respond to customer demands with reduced inventory levels.

Results:

Reduced floor space utilization by 50 percent.
Transformed production scheduling to a customer-pull system.
Reduced cycle time by 30 percent.
Decreased work-in-process inventory levels by 30 percent.

Testimonial:

"Manex provided us with the knowledge and training we needed to really see the whole picture of our manufacturing process. The implementation of lean principles has really improved our customer response rate."

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Don Shaffer, Operations Manager